



The Grange

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 17

MAY 1983

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ...

The Annual Meeting of the Volunteer Committee of The Grange is for every Grange Volunteer. Since some of you missed the meeting on April 11, 1983, The Grange Newsletter is including Kae Fogden's report. It will give everyone "a lift" as you read about how successful the past year has been.

This past year The Grange, the historically restored house of D'Arcy Boulton Jr. and his family was fully operational and manned six days a week from 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm and Thursday evening 6:00 - 9:00 pm. We survived the locking of the doors in the east corridor for security reasons and we have had a total of 34,000 visitors through the house to year end, March 31, 1983 - an increase of 2,000 over last year.

Our school tours average out at about 5 per week during the school year with some lean months and an extra heavy December. We were able to offer some morning tours in December and it is hoped we will be able to continue this policy next year.

In order to provide our visitors with a comprehensive background on the house, the family and the town of York, a 15 minute audio-visual tape was prepared and in use during the summer months when regular tours are not scheduled. This film "Pathway to the Past" has been well received by the public and our volunteers and has been in regular use for all visitors attending the house. Since the first of April we have been running the Restoration film on Sundays at 2:30 pm and we will continue to do this until September.

Security barriers were installed in all the rooms in July and while a sad commentary on our times, a very necessary adjunct for security reasons.

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A comprehensive Docent Training Program was run in the fall by Sheila Badgley in conjunction with Dorothy Duncan our museologist advisor and Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society. A total of 22 people signed up for the training sessions although a few withdrew before sessions were completed. John Carter museum's advisor for the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture was invaluable in tailoring our tours closer to school programs and courses of study. Cavell Tynell, who was involved with the training of the Gibson House volunteers and had, herself, been trained by Dorothy Duncan, helped assess the tour practicing. Docent training is an on-going project as we endeavour this year to structure our slide talks so they fit in with the school curriculum from the Grande III level to Grade XIII covering political and social history as well as the decorative arts. This will give the docents flexibility and teachers can be appraised of our wide variety of topics. Sheila has and is doing a magnificent job on this program - literally bubbling with ideas and thoughts.

The Enrichment Program was also run in the fall by Dorothy Duncan as a series of four lectures:

1. "The Rationale for Restoration of Historic Buildings" D. Duncan
2. "Restoration of The Grange" Peter Stokes
3. "The Costume Question" Jean Hughes, Black Creek Pioneer Village
4. "Researching and Interpreting day to day life in a Georgian House"

- Dorothy Duncan

A further enrichment of 4 weeks in January for Thursday night, Saturday, and Sunday. One of the busiest areas in The Grange is the Costume Department run this past year by Pat Allport together with her knowledgeable committee Jean Gray, Jessica Hunt and Mrs. Thompson. The workroom was a welcome addition as there is now room to house, a sewing machine, cutting table, iron, mirror and a rack for costume storage. This hard working committee also shares the space with exhibition materials, post card sorting, poster storage and preparation for the Christmas Festival. Those marvellous volunteers who are expert needlewomen have made 13 dresses, 40 petticoats, 51 bonnets, 26 smocks, 45 aprons and 50 kerchiefs. As costumed interpreters represent visible authority to the public a decision was made by the Executive not to put volunteers in costume until they were trained and had been working in the house for 2 months. This seems to be working out to everyon's satisfaction.

One of the most important areas in the house is the Housekeeping Department under Jane Carruthers' able chairmanship. This dedicated group of women come in every Monday to wash artifacts, clean silver, polish brass and myreads of other details to keep us spit and polished. The house has never been so well cared for and loved and there were many compliments from the original restoration committee at our champagne reception yesterday. Nancy and Jane also do all the set ups for our entertaining functions.

The Grange library expertly run by Joan Stoicheff, Ruth Vanderlip and Mary Ash provides reference and research material on life in the 19th century.

There are 4 broad areas of interest in the collection - the rare book section (books published prior to 1914), the contemporary book section, the periodical section and the vertical file. All of these sections are the responsibility of the Head Librarian of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The slide collection is also housed in The Grange library and is the responsibility of the Head of the Audio Visual Centre. There are approximately 5,700 slides in the collection and these slides are used in compiling slide talks and lectures. It also contains a pictorial record of the restoration of The Grange. Seventy-two slides were added to the collection this year.

The 1800 books in the rare book and contemporary book sections are based mainly on the decorative arts and Canadian history (early Toronto, Upper Canada and early Ontario history). The decorative arts cover a wide variety of subjects on cooking, furniture, costume, architecture, decorating etc.

Fifty new books have been purchased this year and 156 volunteers and staff used the library for reference and research purposes.

The Grange library also subscribes to 7 periodicals. Antiques, Canadian Collector Canadian Heritage, City & Country Home, History News, Ontario History and the Ontario Museum Quarterly. Five of these are bound annually. The library is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 12:00 - 4:00 pm when a volunteer librarian is in charge. Any other requests are by appointment only and books may not be removed. The librarians are starting a smaller "you can borrow it" section for volunteers. No excuse for us not to be the most well informed volunteers on the North American continent.

Six luncheon lecture talks were held last year. Three in May and 3 in September, ably chaired by Elizabeth McKeown. Most of these were sellouts and total paid attendance - 127 and profit exceeded \$600.00. The series planned for after Christmas was cancelled due to pressure of other commitments but are being reinstated during Sesquicentennial.

Not to forget our flower lady. Emmy Lind, who does the flowers for all our important functions as well as master minding the plan for the Christmas decorations. Emmy is in the Toronto General Hospital having her feet operated on. We wish her luck and a speedy recovery.

The Grange could not operate with out the special contributions of our historic cook Ruth who to my way of thinking is Mrs. Grange personified. Our visitors are reluctant to leave her knowledgeable warm presence and she is the recipient of many letters of gratitude. Charlie Sammons, maintenance man extraordinaire, who, when he is ill as he has been this past year evokes cries of "Oh I wish Charlie were here - he'd know how to fix this" and of course our newest recruit Janet Hodapp, who has taken so much of the day to day responsibility off my shoulders and is smoothing the way for all of us with her cheerful winning and intelligent manner. And I could not end my report without mentioning Joyce Davenall Turner, Volunteer Co-ordinator whose expert advice and knowledgeable background keeps your Chairman on the straight and narrow. And last of all your chairman, who really has done nothing at all except to captain this mighty ship with its superb crew through new deep and uncharted waters. This year has been a tremendous challenge to me and one I have thoroughly enjoyed. I have always been taught and believe that you are only as good as the people who surround you. So, if I am successful, it is due to all of you out there. Thank you.

Norman Walford (Chief of Administration of the AGO) had some very kind words to say about The Grange and its' Volunteers at the Annual Meeting. He began by saying that in 1973 The Grange was opened as a magnificently restored house. For 8 of those 10 years, we had a staff to open and interpret the house to the public, although assistance from Volunteers was always in evidence.

Then in the financial crisis of 2 years ago the Volunteer Committee was asked to meet the challenge of keeping The Grange open to the public. Mr. Walford said "I can remember thinking of the enormity of the request we made - the recruitment, training, scheduling

and general administration associated with volunteers to open this house 6 days a week. But you accomplished it through many hours of committed, although at times frustrating effort. You have succeeded!

In conclusion all I can say for the administration of the Gallery and public is "thank you". Your efforts continue to bring the Gallery great credit and there are many, many, individuals whose lives have been enriched by a visit to The Grange."

EVENTS

The last of THE SERIES OF SLIDE TALK LECTURES will be given on Thursday, May 12, 1983 at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. The Public is invited to attend these free nights, and to participate in the discussion afterwards.

May 12 - A "walk" through 19th century
Toronto. Presented by Alice Gray.

SITE VISIT REMINDER - Sheila Badgley wants all Volunteers to remember that Spring is still a good time to visit an HISTORIC SITE. If you have not signed the list outside the lunchroom, Don't delay! When you do sign, get in touch with the other Volunteers who are going to the same site, so that you can arrange transportation and time etc. You are responsible for your visit.

Please let your Day Captain know by May 25th of your intention to come on May 30th at 6:30 p.m. for a light supper and discussion of your site visit.

MISCELLANEOUS

One rule that all of us forget occasionally is that we should not be wearing TO-DAY'S JEWELRY with a period costume. Wedding bands and pierced ear-rings are fine, but other jewelry should be removed and put in the pockets of the costumes. Remember Seiko watches were not around in 1835.

Unfortunately, recently one of our STERLING SILVER FORKS was taken from the dining-room table. How it happened is not known exactly, but all Volunteers are asked to be extra careful that they not leave any visitor unattended in the house. Things do disappear periodically and they are irreplaceable.

Over 100 AGO STAFF visited The Grange on Monday, April 11, 1983, and we thank them for their wonderful response and support. We were all delighted that they were able to help us celebrate the 10th Anniversary of The Grange.

Jeanne Minnhinnick, Emmett Lewis and Peter Stokes were distinguished guests at The Grange recently. They all said how pleased they were that the house is in such good condition, and that it is looked after by Volunteers who care for it so well.

HISTORY BRUSH-UP - There are a few copies of a Toronto Board of Education publication called "The History of Toronto" in Janet's office. Some are for "in house" use only and some may be signed out for a period of 1 week at a time.

TRAVEL NEWS - Wednesday Volunteers, Jayne Dawson, Louise Saunders, Lynn Anson-Cartwright and Sheila Badgley had a wonderful visit to Charleston and Savannah at the end of March. This busman's holiday was spurred on by Hilda Kidd who was so enthusiastic about her visit the previous year.

NOTE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HOUSE - Through the marvellous efforts of Joan Watson, Jean Gray and their committee, the display case in "the slype" will have "A LADY ON A SWING" beginning in May. She is wearing a reproduction of an early 19th century frock, possibly made in England, and worn in Ontario. The original dress is off-white closely woven cotton printed with pinkish-brown sprigs of flowers. It has a high waisted bodice, with a wide neckline, trimmed with a narrow frill. Note that the crossover is to the right, as ladies left crossover bodices, and button closures had not come into being at this time. The front skirt, is dropped and gathers on a drawstring. The long sleeves are finished with a frill.

The original dress is in the ROM Collection, a gift of Mrs. G. Templeton of Toronto.

Mary Hartford of the Textile Department of ROM has been very helpful, letting me see, and copy these early Ontario dresses in their collection.

If anyone is interested in patch work quilting we have a very large box of pieces, come and see! I also have several books on quilting and quilting patterns. Jean Gray

MARY AZIZ TELLS US THAT - the latest word is out. There will be another "Celebration" during the first week of December. So... she welcomes any input - constructive criticism - suggestions that anyone might have. Some of the items that sold well last year were - mustards, chutney, exotic jams and jellies (e.g. angostura, vermouth, wild raspberry, chili sauce, pesto) and shortbread, shortbread, shortbread!

Does anyone know where small jars can be purchased? Cheap! As well please save any small jars you might have, it adds interest and variety.
